

HISTORICITY OF THE RESURRECTION

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile...” – 1 Corinthians 15:17
Humanity’s only hope rests completely on the validity of Christ’s resurrection.

1. **Most of the resurrection history is found in the Bible.**
 - a. Is the Bible a reliable source?
 1. The Bible is textually accurate.
 - a. The NT has copies from AD 125 (~25-70 years after written), The Iliad’s earliest date at 400 BC (500 years after written).
 - b. NT has 24,000 early copies (~200 yrs) vs. Iliad’s 643.
 2. The Bible is prophetically accurate.
 - a. Biblical prophecies confirmed with intricate accuracy.
 - b. Jesus alone fulfilled over 300 (odds of just 8 = 1 in 10^{17}).
 3. The Bible is historically accurate.
 - a. Real people, real places and real events corroborated by archeology.
 4. The Bible is scientifically accurate.
 - a. Radioactive decay (2Peter 3:10), hydrologic cycle (Ps.135:7, Ec.1:7, Job 36:27-29), spherical earth (Job 40:22) and many more (air has weight, fresh water springs in ocean, etc.).
 5. The Bible’s authors agree (over 40 authors of different backgrounds, times, societal status, languages and ethnicities).
 6. The Bible is full of mathematical, sequential and prophetic codes.
 - a. Mathematical codes (prime number multiples in words, sentences, passages and books; sequential codes throughout).
 - b. Prophetic codes embedded in the text.
 7. The Bible has the power to change human beings.
 - b. Discuss various theories.
 1. Swoon Theory – supposed that Jesus was only half dead when buried.
Impossible – After being hung on a cross and speared through the side no medical help would work; if by some natural miracle Jesus did survive the crucifixion – how did he roll a 2 ton rock and escape an entire Roman guard?
 2. Eyewitness accounts were hallucinations, illusions or mistakes.
Impossible – If the accounts were hallucinations Jesus’ body could have been presented by authorities.
 3. The body was stolen – **Impossible** – The Romans and Jews would not have stolen the body (they had a vested interest in stopping Christianity). The disciples could not have overpowered a Roman guard (especially considering their cowardice and unbelief).
 4. The body was moved – **Impossible** – When accounts of the resurrection started authorities could have produced the body.
 - b. Some historical evidences.
 1. Jewish and Roman extra-biblical sources admit an empty tomb.
 - a. Josephus and the Jewish “Toledoth Jeshu.” (“positive evidence from a hostile source” – Dr. Paul Maier).
 2. John described pericardial and pleural effusion – clear fluid and blood form the spear wound – a fabrication wouldn’t have included this.
 3. The Jews had no belief that the Messiah would die in the first place.
 - a. Death by crucifixion was believed to be evidence of God’s curse – not evidence of God himself.
2. **Did Jesus really die in the first place?**
 - a. Discuss various theories.
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3. **Jesus’ burial.**
 - a. Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus.

1. A member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (which accused Jesus).
 2. A fabrication wouldn't glorify its own nemesis.
 3. Everyone would have known the location of Joseph's property and tomb – making it impossible to hide anything.
 4. No competing independent burial stories.
 - a. If it were a fabrication there would have been other burial accounts also.
 - b. The Roman seal was placed over the 2 ton rock over the entrance to the tomb.
 1. Breaking a Roman seal was punished with upside down crucifixion.
 2. A 2 ton rock was placed in front of the tomb.
 - c. A roman guard, part of a Roman legion, was placed in front of the tomb.
 1. Roman guards were undefeatable.
 - a. Had they been defeated this would have been used as evidence against the resurrection.
 2. Roman guard members were burned to death if they fell asleep at guard (12 would sleep in front of four guarding – they would rotate shifts).
 - a. Not a single one would have fallen asleep, much less the whole guard.
 3. When they found Jesus' tomb empty the guard fled – also punishable by death.
- 4. Tomb found empty by women.**
- a. In the first century AD a woman's testimony was not even accepted in court.
 1. A fabrication wouldn't claim women found the empty tomb.
 - b. Supposed discrepancies – all just different parts of the same story – no contradictions.
- 5. The earliest Jewish and Roman response (described in Biblical and extra-biblical accounts) admitted an empty tomb.**
- a. The earliest Jewish response recorded in the Bible assumed an empty tomb.
 1. If the body had been in the tomb there would be no argument today.
 2. The Jewish leaders claimed the body had been stolen.
 3. This would be impossible considering the security guarding the tomb.
- 6. Evidences of the resurrection.**
- a. The Jews didn't even believe confidently believe in life after death for anyone.
 1. The resurrection would not have been fabricated.
 - b. There were hundreds of eye witnesses (1Cor 15).
 1. These included hostile witnesses – like Saul of Tarsus – who became a believer due to seeing Jesus.
 - c. No denials – if Jesus was known to have died – people would have said so.
 - d. The Christians exhibited a complete lack of faith at the first news of the resurrection.
 - e. They all went on to face torture and persecution, most died as martyrs (for a lie?).
 1. People often die for what they believe in, never for a known lie.
 2. All (not only some) were willing to give everything for Jesus.
- 7. Other evidences.**
- a. The Christian's creed – earliest documentation of the Christians' beliefs and observations.
 - b. The Apostles used Christ's resurrection as proof for the gospel – if Jesus' body were available people would never have allowed such statements.
 - c. Restate criterion of embarrassment (how tomb was found, disciples' unbelief, Joseph of Arimathea, etc.), these embarrassing details would have been omitted from a fabrication.
 - d. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection (Jn.2:18-22).
 - e. Disciples adamantly claimed that Jesus rose physically.
 1. If they were creating a lie they would probably have chosen to make it un-falsifiable by claiming He rose spiritually.
- 8. What is the reason for this talk (not to build a Christian ego)?**
- a. The resurrection confirms Jesus' trustworthiness and authority in making His claims.
 - b. The evidence convincingly confirms that the resurrection occurred.
 1. Jesus' claims must be personally considered.

2. Have you accepted His invitation and salvation (a free gift)?
- c. The resurrection radically changed the disciples' lives – from unbelieving cowards to fearless martyrs – *The resurrection will change your life also.*

What will you do with the evidence?